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Deployed Utah Guard Soldier Awarded French Defense Medal

DRAPER, Utah — Specialist Kevin Nielsen, of Glenwood, Utah, currently deployed with the Utah National Guard's 142nd Military Intelligence Battalion, received the Bronze French National Defense Medal in a ceremony Dec. 7 in Afghanistan.

Colonel Jacques Aragones, commander of the French Army's 8th Marine Infantry Parachutist Regiment, presented the award to Nielsen for his support as a French linguist to Task Force Chimera, the French unit responsible for the battle space in Kapisa Province, Afghanistan.

Nielsen deployed in January 2008 with the 300 Soldiers of the 142nd, to provide intelligence support to Coalition forces involved in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Several months into his deployment, Nielsen was reassigned from Task Force Wasatch (the name given to the 142nd while in theater) to a French fire base where he serves as a translator, interpreter and liaison between French and American troops.

"I do anything and everything that involves interpretation and translation of documents to manning a radio while in a French vehicle to help maintain situational awareness for U.S. elements," said Nielsen.

For more information please contact Spc. Nielsen directly at kacadie@gmail.com.